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ABSTRACT

This manual provides information concerning the appropriate use of alternative testing techniques when pupils with handicapping conditions participate in statewide testing programs. It is written for parents and professionals involved in the education of pupils with handicapping conditions, and is to be used as a resource by members of Committees on the Handicapped, Boards of Education and school principals who have the responsibility for authorizing the use of alternative testing techniques for pupils during statewide testing programs. The first section of the manual discusses the purposes of the statewide testing programs and the eligibility of pupils to have alternative testing techniques used. The second section describes the kinds of alternative testing techniques which have been approved by the Board of Regents and the appropriate circumstances for their use. The third section deals with the ordering, administration and scoring of test materials for pupils with handicapping conditions. The final section suggests roles and responsibilities for those individuals who are involved in planning and implementing educational programs and evaluations for students using alternative measures. (Author/PN)

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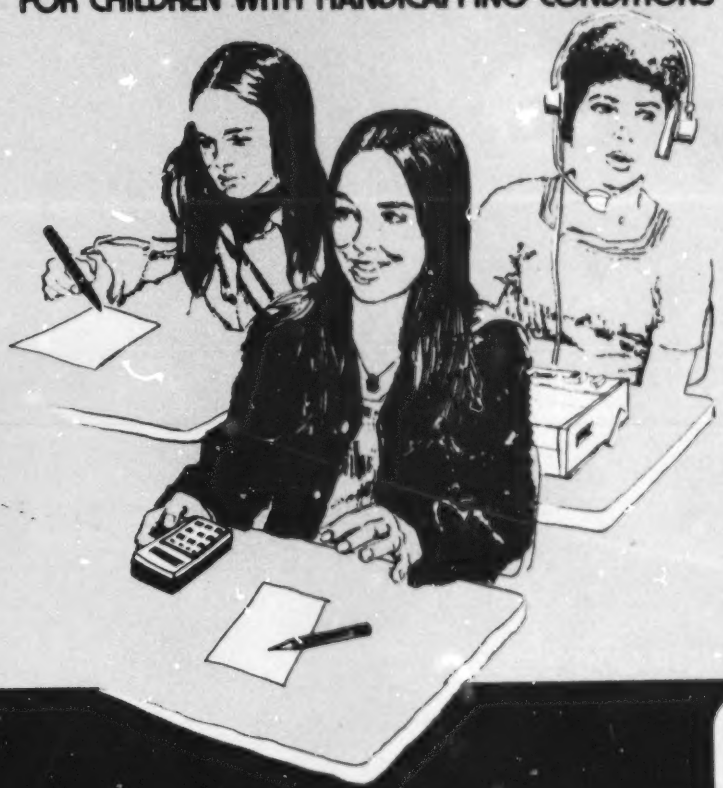
ALTERNATIVE TESTING TECHNIQUES

FOR CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS



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ALTERNATIVE TESTING TECHNIQUES FOR PUPILS WITH HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

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THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office for Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions
Albany, New York 12234
March 1982

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FOREWORD

It is a goal of education to assist all students in obtaining, to their maximum extent, competencies in the foundation skills of reading, writing and mathematics. In the attempt to adequately measure students' progress toward this aim, particular attention must be given to the manner in which testing is conducted. To ensure fairness in testing situations and to allow for an equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement and capability, pupils with handicapping conditions may be provided with alternative testing techniques. These techniques must be consistent with sound instructional practices and must be based upon consideration of each pupil's individual needs.

It is the intent of this manual to provide information concerning the appropriate use of alternative testing techniques when pupils with handicapping conditions participate in statewide testing programs. It is written for parents and professionals involved in the education of pupils with handicapping conditions, and to be used as a resource by members of Committees on the Handicapped, Boards of Education and school principals who have the responsibility for authorizing the use of alternative testing techniques for pupils during statewide testing programs.

The first section of the manual discusses the purposes of the statewide testing programs and the eligibility of pupils to have alternative testing techniques used. The second section describes the kinds of alternative testing techniques which have been approved by the Board of Regents and the appropriate circumstances for their use. The third section deals with the ordering, administration and scoring of test materials for pupils with handicapping conditions. The final section suggests roles and responsibilities for those individuals who are involved in planning and implementing educational programs and evaluations for students using alternative measures.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Statewide Testing Programs and Alternative Testing Techniques

There are four statewide testing programs that involve the use of alternative testing techniques for pupils with handicapping conditions. These programs are the Pupil Evaluation Program, the preliminary competency testing program, the Regents competency testing program, and the Regents examination program. The Pupil Evaluation Program tests and the preliminary competency tests are administered to pupils at selected points in grades 3-9 to identify those pupils who need special help in developing the ability to use mathematics, to read, and to write. Pupils who score below the State reference point on these tests must be given remedial instruction in the areas of mathematics, reading, and writing.

The Regents competency tests are used to assess the proficiency of high school pupils in the basic skills of mathematics, reading and writing. Passing scores on the tests satisfy the competency testing requirements for a local high school diploma. Regents examinations are used to evaluate pupil achievement in State courses of study. The passing of certain Regents examinations is part of the requirements for a Regents diploma, and passing scores on the Regents examinations in English and mathematics satisfy the competency testing requirements for a local high school diploma.

Pupils with handicapping conditions should be given every opportunity to pursue the same coursework and participate in the same testing programs as nonhandicapped pupils. The use of alternative testing techniques is authorized for pupils with handicapping conditions so that such pupils will not be denied the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned solely because they are handicapped.

Pupil Eligibility To Use Alternative Testing Techniques

Under normal circumstances, all pupils are required to follow the same test administration procedures when taking statewide tests. These standard procedures are required so that no pupil is caused to pass or fail a test unfairly due to a poorly managed testing situation. However, it has been recognized that some pupils who participate in the statewide testing programs may be unable to take the tests under the usual circumstances or by using standard testing techniques. Pupils with certain handicapping conditions are often at a disadvantage because the standard testing procedures make it difficult or impossible for the pupil to demonstrate or express what has been learned. Therefore, the Board of Regents has indicated that principals may authorize the use of approved alternative testing techniques for pupils with certain handicapping conditions to accommodate the unique individual needs of those pupils in the testing situation.

For a handicapped pupil to be eligible to use one or more of the alternative testing techniques, the pupil must be identified by the Committee on the Handicapped (COH) of the district as having a handicapping condition. Furthermore the need for alternative testing techniques must be reflected consistently

in the pupil's Individualized Education Program (IEP). For example, a physically handicapped pupil who is unable to hold a pencil may be permitted to dictate answers to another person who can record the answers; a visually impaired person may use a large print or braille edition of a test and may either dictate or use braille to record the answers; or an emotionally disturbed pupil may take a test in an appropriate alternative setting under special supervision. In each of these examples, the recommended alternative testing technique should be an integral and ongoing part of the pupil's IEP.

It must be noted that a low level of intellectual ability does not qualify a pupil for using an alternative testing technique when taking a State test. There are no approved alternative testing techniques for pupils whose handicapping condition is solely mental retardation. The pupil must have some handicapping condition which interferes with his or her ability to use standard testing techniques while taking a test. For example, a pupil with a physically or emotionally handicapping condition who functions in the mentally retarded range of ability may utilize only those alternative testing techniques which are necessary to accommodate the pupil's physical or emotional handicapping condition.

APPROVED ALTERNATIVE TESTING TECHNIQUES

Types of Alternative Testing Techniques

Two types of alternative testing techniques have been approved by the Board of Regents for pupils with handicapping conditions. The first type consists of modifications that alter the testing procedures but not the pupil skills being tested. The extension of time limits and the administration of the tests in special locations are such modifications. These modifications in testing procedures are allowed for all statewide tests and are not limited to pupils with handicapping conditions. They may be used for nonhandicapped pupils who, because of special circumstances, cannot take an examination following the normal testing procedures. For example, a pupil who is confined because of an illness may have an examination administered at his or her home or a hospital by a proctor designated by the principal and may also have the time limit of the examination extended.

The second type consists of modifications that alter the testing procedures so that the skills being tested are different than those intended when the tests were prepared. Examples of such modifications are reading test questions to pupils for a reading comprehension test and allowing pupils to use a calculator or an abacus during a mathematics test. These modifications are limited to pupils with handicapping conditions, and certain modifications are not allowed for Regents examinations. These exceptions are noted in the sections on pages 4-8 that deal with the individual alternative testing techniques.

Any alternative testing technique which has been included in a pupil's IEP should be necessary and consistently utilized by the pupil for any authorized testing situation which the pupil is involved in throughout the course of his or her instructional program. In addition to the statewide tests, this would include general academic achievement tests which may be used throughout a school district and teacher-developed quizzes and examinations. When any of the alternative testing techniques are used for tests that have norms, the test manual

should be checked to determine if the modification would invalidate the use of the test norms for the pupil using the modification.

In considering the use of alternative testing techniques for a pupil, principals are not limited to the authorization of specific techniques for pupils with certain designated handicapping conditions. Principals have the option of authorizing any of the approved techniques which have been identified and recommended for any eligible handicapped pupil (except those identified as handicapped solely on the basis of intellectual ability) in consideration of the pupil's individual instructional needs. Some techniques which have not been specifically approved for certain statewide tests may be included in a pupil's instructional program. For example, a pupil's IEP may indicate a need for the pupil to be given short segments of classroom tests in separate testing sessions over the course of more than one day. While this modification is not authorized for the Regents competency tests and Regents examinations, it should be used for all other testing situations including the administration of the Pupil Evaluation Program and the preliminary competency tests. A table showing the suggested use of the alternative testing techniques based on learner characteristics is provided on page 8.

Use of Alternative Testing Techniques

Time Limit Extended or Waived*

Some pupils with handicapping conditions may require more time than usual to complete examinations. These pupils may have learning disabilities or behavioral characteristics which affect the rate at which they process information. Physical disabilities such as visual difficulties or motor impairments which affect fingers and arms may decrease a student's working rate. Pupils who use special equipment such as a typewriter, or those with labored speech who dictate their responses to an amanuensis, may require more than the usual time to complete examinations.

Hyperactive pupils and those pupils with a short attention span may require rest periods or diversion from a single activity. Such pupils may need significant attention from a proctor for structuring the task and redirection if they become confused or fail to give full attention to an examination. Pupils with health impairments may have limited vitality and tire easily or require periodic restroom visits.

The Regents competency tests and Regents examinations are "secure" examinations that are scheduled for administration during a three-hour examination period. Handicapped pupils may be given as much time as is necessary to complete these examinations, but the examinations must be completed on the day that they are scheduled to be administered. Brief rest periods are permitted during the administration of these examinations. If it is necessary for a pupil to leave the examination room, the pupil must be accompanied by a proctor. Handicapped pupils should be given as much time as necessary to complete the other statewide tests, and different parts of these tests may be completed on different days if necessary.

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* This modification may be used with any pupil.

Examinations Administered in a Special Location*

Some pupils with handicapping conditions may benefit from taking examinations in a special location when the usual large group examination setting is not appropriate. A pupil may take an examination in a separate classroom or an administrator's office. A pupil who is at home or hospitalized due to an illness may take an examination in either setting if the pupil is medically able.

A special location may be necessary when a pupil's behavior or the use of certain alternative testing techniques would be disturbing to other pupils. Such alternative testing techniques would include the reading of an examination to a visually impaired pupil or the use of a microphone and amplifier by a hearing impaired pupil. Placing pupils in corridors outside the examination site to avoid their disturbing others is not recommended.

Other pupils may require an alternate environment to accommodate specialized equipment or furniture. Large tables which are taller than an average desk may be necessary to accommodate a student in a wheelchair. A study carrel may be helpful for a hyperactive child or one with a short attention span who is easily distracted or unable to stay on task. This setting would allow a proctor to provide additional assistance to the student without disturbing others.

All of the statewide tests may be administered in special locations to pupils with handicapping conditions. When administering each of the statewide tests in a special location, the usual procedures for administering the test must be followed as closely as possible.

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* This modification may be used with any pupil.

Answers Recorded in Any Manner

Some pupils with handicapping conditions are unable to record their responses to examination questions in the conventional manner. These pupils may have physically handicapping condtions which affect motor skills or visual impairment, learning disabilities which affect eye-hand coordination, or language difficulties in written expression. For all of the statewide tests except those parts of Regents examinations that measure writing ability, pupils with handicapping conditions may provide their answers in any manner that is specified in the pupils' IEPs. Visually impaired pupils may dictate their answers to a tape recorder or an amanuensis. Deaf pupils may use sign language or total communication to dictate their answers. Severely physically handicapped pupils may use a pointer or a communication board. Learning disabled pupils with language difficulties in written expression may dictate their answers and not be required to provide evidence of spelling ability and/or punctuation skills.

For those parts of Regents examinations that are designed to measure writing ability in English or a foreign language, answers can be dictated only by pupils who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, or physically unable to write. When dictating their answers, such pupils must provide all punctuation, the spelling of more difficult words, paragraphing, etc., so that the only writing skill not performed by the pupils is the recording of their answers on paper.

Pupil Permitted Use of a Calculator or Abacus

Some pupils have the reasoning ability to complete narrative problems and involved computations, but may have visual or motor impairments which limit their grapho-motor skills. Pupils with learning disabilities may be unable to memorize math facts or have attention deficits which inhibit processing of complicated calculations. Some deaf students may require more than the usual amount of time to read and understand test directions and word problems. The use of a calculator might increase their rate in completing the examination. Visually impaired students might use braille calculators for similar purposes.

Pupils with handicapping conditions may use calculators whenever necessary for all of the statewide tests except for certain Regents examinations. Calculators may be used by pupils during the science Regents examinations, but they must not be used in any manner during the Regents examinations in mathematics and business subjects.

Questions Read to Pupil

Some pupils with handicapping conditions will have visual impairments that will affect their ability to read printed examination questions. Other pupils may have motor impairments, hyperactivity, or behavior difficulties which affect their attention span. When braille and large type examinations are either not available or not suitable for such pupils, the examination questions may be read to the pupils by a proctor, or an audio or visual tape may be used to administer the examinations. The use of sign language and speech is also permissible for deaf and hearing impaired pupils who have language difficulties which affect their reading ability.

The regular examination booklet should be used when a proctor reads an examination to a pupil. The proctor should obtain the examination booklet from the principal at least one hour before the required starting time, so that he or she can become familiar with the examination questions before reading them to the pupil. Proctors should be careful to read the test items to the pupil as they appear on the printed page. Although the proctor may read required reference information from tables, charts, and graphs, it is not appropriate to interpret or explain any portions of the examinations which would suggest the answer to the pupil.

In some situations, the examination format does not permit the question to be read without indicating the answer. This may occur with reference materials or charts. Under these circumstances the question should be omitted and the credit prorated.

This alternative testing technique may be used for all statewide tests except for those parts of Regents examinations that measure reading ability in English or a foreign language. Such parts of Regents examinations can be read only to pupils who are visually impaired, or signed to pupils who are hearing impaired.

Examination Copy Provided in Braille and Large Type

Braille and large type editions of all of the statewide tests are available for pupils with limited sight or no sight. Limited field of vision, perceptual or motor problems may affect the pupil's ability to do close paper/pencil work or read regular size print. These circumstances may require the use of large type. Braille

or large type materials may be ordered from the State Education Department on the school's regular form. Any necessary reference materials will automatically be included with the test questions.

Large type materials are exact reproductions of the regular examinations. They may be administered in the same examination site under the same testing conditions and directions as the regular examinations.

Braille examinations also require no special directions to the pupil. Separate or special answer sheets are not provided. The pupil may answer the questions in any manner appropriate and familiar to the pupil. The pupil may write, type or answer in braille, dictate to a proctor or a mechanical recording device, or use any combination of these methods.

When a braille examination is prepared by the Department, any question omitted because it could not be reproduced in braille is clearly indicated in braille on the examination booklet and in type on the scoring key. When questions are omitted, the credits are prorated on a special key that is enclosed with the braille booklet. The person scoring the examination does not need to do any additional computations to prorate the examination.

Sample copies of past examinations and reference tables in braille and large type may be borrowed from the Office for Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions, Bureau of Program Development. These copies should be helpful to students and teachers preparing for the statewide examinations.

Questions Omitted and Credit Prorated

Some pupils with handicapping conditions will be unable to complete particular questions due to the item format. Pupils with visual impairments or learning disabilities may not be able to interpret the visual information in graphs, charts and maps. Other pupils may have auditory difficulties which prevent them from completing those items involving dictation, as in many spelling tests. When questions cannot be interpreted or relayed to these pupils, such questions should be omitted from the examination and the credit for the question prorated.

The omitting of questions and the prorating of credits for braille editions of the statewide tests are discussed in the section entitled "Examination Copy Provided in Braille and Large Type." For a reader-administered statewide test, the proctor administering the test should review it before it is administered to the handicapped pupil and identify questions which may not be appropriate for the pupil. The suggested items to be omitted must be shown to the principal and the principal must approve the omission of any questions from reader-administered tests. The person rating a reader-administered test should prorate the credit for the questions omitted from the test by considering the number of omitted questions in comparison to the total number of questions.

The following example is provided to illustrate the method of prorating credit for a Regents examination. In the example, the principal has authorized the omission of 5 questions, worth one credit each. The pupil obtained 65 credits out of the remaining possible total of 95 credits. The prorated score, therefore, is 68 percent. The same general procedure would be used to prorate credit for the other statewide tests.

Example for Computing Prorated Scores

$$\text{Prorated Examination Score} = \frac{\text{Pupil's actual score on required questions}}{\text{Maximum possible score minus value of omitted questions}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Prorated Examination} = \frac{65}{100-5} \times 100$$

$$\text{Prorated Examination Score} = \frac{65}{95} \times 100 = 68\%$$

Suggested Use of Alternative Testing Techniques Based Upon Learner Characteristics

Learner Characteristic	Alternative Testing Techniques: Time Limit Extended/ Waived	Exam Administered in a Special Location	Answers Recorded in any Manner*	Use of a Calculator or Abacus	Questions Read to Pupil**	Exam Copy provided in Braille & Large Print	Questions Omitted/ Credit Prorated
Visual Impairment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Physical Impairment with motor difficulties	X	X	X	X	X		
Health Impairment (affecting vitality, or bowel & bladder control - may be hospitalized or at home)	X	X					X
Behavior difficulties (e.g. hyperactivity/or short attention span)	X	X		X	X		X
Slow rate of processing information	X			X			
Limited eye-hand coordination	X	X	X	X			X
Inability to memorize math facts				X			
Visual perception difficulties	X		X		X	X	X
Auditory perception difficulties	X	X	X		X		X
Hearing impaired w/language difficulties	X	X	X	X	X		X
Labored speech	X	X					
Need for special equipment	X	X	X	X			

*Includes use of a tape recorder or dictation to an amanuensis
**Includes use of sign language and cued speech, audio or visual tape

ORDERING, ADMINISTERING AND SCORING STATEWIDE TESTS

Ordering Test Materials

Order forms for each of the statewide tests are sent to schools approximately four months before the tests are scheduled to be administered. The Pupil Evaluation Program tests are scheduled to be administered during the month of May and the Regents competency tests and Regents examinations are administered in January, June and August of each school year. The preliminary competency tests may be administered at any time during the school year; order forms for the tests are sent to schools in May.

All test materials for pupils with handicapping conditions can be ordered on the regular order forms. When braille and large type editions of the statewide tests are ordered, any necessary reference materials will automatically be included with the test shipment. A special order is not necessary.

Administering the Tests

Complete directions for administering the statewide tests are included in each test shipment. The directions for administering any of the statewide tests are also available upon request from:

New York State Education Department
Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Testing
Programs, Room 771 EBA
Albany, New York 12234

The school principal is responsible for the administration of the statewide tests, and the principal must authorize any special test arrangements that are made for pupils with handicapping conditions.

School principals must appoint a chief proctor for each room in which a test is held. A proctor may monitor a test room in which a handicapped pupil is placed or provide direct assistance to a handicapped pupil using any of the alternative testing techniques. Whenever possible, it is suggested that a special education teacher be assigned to proctor handicapped pupils. If regular education teachers serve in this capacity, it is important that they be prepared or have some experience with the student's handicapping condition.

The school principal should hold an orientation session sometime before the beginning of each test period to familiarize proctors with the procedures to be followed when administering statewide tests. Proctors should be given the specific directions for administering the tests several days before the beginning of the test period so they become familiar with the directions before administering the tests.

For the Regents competency tests and Regents examinations, proctors normally are not allowed to open and read the test booklets before they are given to pupils. However, when a proctor is assigned to read a test to a pupil with a handicapping condition, the proctor should be given the test booklet one hour before the start of the test. The proctor should review the test and identify any

questions which should be considered for omission because they cannot be appropriately presented to the pupil. With the principal's approval, these questions can be omitted from the test for that pupil.

In giving oral instructions to pupils with handicapping conditions, proctors should be aware of those students who may have auditory handicaps. It may be necessary to repeat the instructions or to divide sentences into short meaningful sections and to pause between sections. Some hearing impaired students and learning disabled students may have language difficulties which would require the proctor to repeat the directions using simpler vocabulary. Proctors should make sure that all students understand the test instructions before beginning the tests.

During administration of any tests, the proctor should check to make sure that pupils are correctly using answer sheets. Pupils with visual impairment and some learning disabled pupils may have difficulty in reading multiple choice examinations and completing answer sheets which require the darkening of answer spaces or the circling of a choice which corresponds to the appropriate test items. A straight edge might be a helpful guide for a pupil who has difficulty in visual tracking or locating the correct row.

In January and August, the Department may offer some of the Regents competency tests and Regents examination in "restricted form." All copies of the restricted test booklets must be returned to the Department. When administering restricted forms, the test booklets can be seen only by the pupils taking the tests. Proctors are permitted to open a test booklet only to assist a handicapped pupil. In those cases when a handicapped pupil may be unable to read a question or a word on a braille examination, the proctor may break the seal on another envelope containing a restricted test booklet to read the question to the pupil. When the test is completed, the proctor must reseal the test booklet in the envelope with an attached signed explanation as to why the envelope was opened.

When the tests are completed, each proctor must sign the Deputy and Proctor Certificate to indicate that the rules and regulations for administering the tests were properly observed.

Scoring the Tests

To the fullest possible extent, the same standards should be used to rate the answer papers for pupils with handicapping conditions as are used to rate the answer papers of other pupils. The principal may authorize variations only if they are required by and are consistent with approved modifications in testing procedures.

Specific directions for scoring the Pupil Evaluation Program tests, the preliminary competency tests, and the Regents competency tests, along with general instructions for rating the Regents examinations, are included in each test shipment. Guides containing specific directions for rating some of the Regents examinations are available upon request from the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Testing Programs.

SUGGESTED ROLES IN PLANNING FOR ALTERNATIVE TESTING TECHNIQUES

Many individuals have roles and responsibilities with regard to alternative testing techniques and recommendations for their use with pupils with handicapping conditions. This includes members of Committees on the Handicapped, Boards of Education, school principals, special education and regular education teachers and parents. This section discusses the specific roles and responsbilities of these individuals.

The Committee on the Handicapped

The Committee on the Handicapped must identify and document in the IEP the pupil's need for alternative testing techniques. When a pupil is initially referred or during the annual review of a student, the COH should utilize available information from previous testing situations to identify the alternative testing techniques that may be necessary. In addition, methods used in an evaluation for placement may suggest appropriate alternative testing techniques. These methods should be included in the report to the COH. They may be utilized by the COH in the development of its recommendations for alternative testing techniques to be included in the Phase I IEP.

The initial consideration for alternative testing techniques made by the COH in the Phase I is a guideline for further IEP development and implementation. The use of specific alternative testing techniques should be discussed in the planning conference and documented in the objective criteria and evaluation procedures of the Phase II IEP.

The COH should identify early in a pupil's instructional program, the components necessary for the pupil to earn a high school diploma. Consideration of alternative testing techniques is an important factor which must be included in the Committee on the Handicapped's long-term planning for the pupil's program.

The Board of Education

The role of the Board of Education is to develop policies that are consistent with State requirements. Members should be familiar with publications disseminated by the State Education Department regarding alternative testing techniques and related issues. These materials are to be made available to school personnel and the public.

In reviewing recommendations from the Committee on the Handicapped, Boards of Education will be considering a pupil's need for alternative testing techniques in the instructional program and on statewide testing programs.

School Principal

The principal of each school should inform all teachers of their role in carrying out those components of the IEP which relate to the use of alternative testing techniques. Teachers should be aware of the specific alternative testing techniques for each handicapped pupil and the means by which these techniques are to be used during the pupil's daily instructional program and for school examinations.

Further, the principal of each school has the reponsibility for implementing procedures for the school's compliance with statewide testing requirements. This includes ordering examination materials, appointing a chief proctor for each room in which an examination is to be held and assigning sufficient deputy proctors to maintain adequate supervision of pupils at all times.

The school principal has the responsibility of formally authorizing the use of any appropriate alternative testing techniques for pupils with handicapping conditions during statewide testing programs. To facilitate the consistent use of particular testing methods for a handicapped pupil, it is suggested that the school principal be involved or consulted in the early development of the pupil's IEP. In this way, the principal can make an informed decision as to whether or not a COH recommendation for alternative testing techniques should be authorized.

During the administration of the statewide testing program, the building principal should be available to handle any unexpected situations that may arise. Upon completion of the statewide tests, the school principal must be certain that all examinations have been accurately scored. Particular attention should be given to those examinations that have been prorated.

The school principal is responsible for making a report to the State Education Department within 15 days of the date that a diploma was awarded to a pupil who has demonstrated competence in the basic skills with the use of alternative testing techniques. This report should include the name of the recipient of the diploma, the reason for the use of any alternative testing techniques and the nature and results of using the alternative testing techniques.

Special Education And Regular Education Teachers

A special education teacher's role in evaluation and classroom instruction provides a strong base to make recommendations for appropriate testing techniques for a handicapped pupil. The special education teacher may serve as a mandated member of the COH and be involved in the multidisciplinary team development of a pupil's Phase I IEP when alternative testing techniques are recommended. The special education teacher may also consult with the COH when newly identified pupils with handicapping conditions are being considered for placement in that teacher's classroom program.

The special education teacher must arrange a planning conference with the parent to complete the Phase II IEP within 30 days of placement. A statement of short-term objectives, along with appropriate evaluation criteria and procedures to determines whether instructional objectives are being achieved, should be included in Phase II. If the pupil is mainstreamed into a regular education program, it is recommended that the regular education teacher participate in the planning

conference. This teacher can then contribute to the discussion regarding the modifications necessary for the pupil to benefit from the regular educational program. This would include instructional activities, materials and evaluation with the use of any recommended alternative testing techniques. In the event that any participant in the planning conference suggests an appropriate alternative testing technique which had not been previously noted, a referral should be made to the COH for a modification in the pupil's Phase I IEP.

When transitional support services have been recommended for a teacher of a pupil who is mainstreamed or moved to a less restrictive environment, the special education teacher may serve as a consultant to provide advice regarding the various techniques that would be appropriate for that particular pupil. The special education teacher may also provide direct assistance to the teacher in the development and administration of testing materials using alternative testing techniques. In order to prepare a handicapped pupil for future participation in statewide testing programs, it is important for teachers to be aware of the appropriate use of various techniques in these situations. Alternative testing techniques used in the classroom should be provided in a manner which is consistent with their use during statewide test situations.

The Parent

Parents must be notified when the Committee on the Handicapped and the Board of Education are making decisions regarding the educational programs of their handicapped children. This notification provides the opportunity for parents to be involved in these decisions. Parents can address the Committee during the development of the COH recommendations for the pupil's Phase I IEP and during the Phase II IEP planning conference. They can request particular alternative testing techniques or other provisions in the pupil's program at any time. During the school year, they should receive reports of the pupil's progress. If any recommended techniques do not appear to be satisfactory, they should contact the special education teacher or the principal to initiate any necessary changes.

In the event that the COH or principal does not accept the parent's request for alternative testing techniques, the parties may have an informal conference to discuss the pupil's needs. The parent may also pursue the due process procedures of an impartial hearing and subsequent appeal to the Commissioner to resolve the conflict.

A CLOSING STATEMENT

Pupils with handicapping conditions are guaranteed the right to a free appropriate public education. This includes the opportunity to pursue the course-work and evaluations which are required of all students who seek a high school diploma. The Regents competency tests establish a minimum standard of achievement for pupils to attain in the foundation skills of reading, writing and math. Special education is designed to meet the individual needs of those handicapped pupils who require assistance in order to benefit from their education programs and to achieve academically. Some handicapped pupils may satisfactorily participate in school and statewide tests under standard test administration procedures. However, other pupils may require various accommodations in the testing situation in order to demonstrate what has been learned. Alternative testing techniques have been approved for this purpose.

The determination of a pupil's need for alternative testing techniques should be made early in the pupil's education program. Necessary accommodations should be an integral part of that program. Although many professionals and parents are involved in the long-range planning and implementation of a handicapped pupil's educational program, the COH plays a particularly important role.

Provision has been made for those handicapped pupils who are ineligible to use alternative testing techniques for statewide tests. Those pupils who are identified as handicapped solely on the basis of limited intellectual ability may earn a high school diploma if they complete all of the regular course requirements and pass the Regents competency tests under standard procedures for test administration. A school district or the principal of a nonpublic school may award a local certificate to a pupil who, on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation including an individual psychological examination, is determined to possess general intellectual capacity that falls lower than 1.5 standard deviations below the mean of the general population, and completes an appropriate Individualized Education Program. Each school district or principal of a nonpublic school must report to the State Education Department within 15 days after the June graduation, the total number and the names of the pupils awarded certificates by each high school in that year. No other certificates may be awarded, except for certificates recognizing achievement beyond the high school diploma. (Section 103.5 - Regulations of the Commissioner).

To facilitate understanding and compliance with the New York State Education Law and Regulations regarding requirements for high school diplomas and the appropriate use of alternative testing techniques, local education agencies are encouraged to contact the State Education Department. The Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Testing Program has overall responsibility for administration of the statewide tests. Questions and comments concerning test policy and procedures should be addressed to:

New York State Education Department
Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Testing Programs
Room 771, Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234

Specific concerns and questions regarding the development of the Individualized Education Program and the roles and responsibilities of the persons involved in the planning and preparation for use of alternative testing techniques should be addressed to:

New York State Education Department
Bureau of Program Development
Room 1069, Education Building Annex
Albany, New York 12234

REFERENCES PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Information Bulletin #29
Subject: High School Diploma Requirements
Relative to Students Identified as Handicapped
February 1980

New York State - Preliminary Competency Test in Reading
Manual for Administrators and Teachers
1979

The Regents Competency Testing Program
Information Bulletin
September 1980

Regents Examinations and Competency Tests
School Administrator's Manual
1981 Edition

Robert R. Spillane Memo to Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools and District Superintendents
Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Subject: State Competency Testing and Handicapped Pupils
September 1980

Robert R. Spillane Memo to Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools and District Superintendents and Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Subject: Terminating Pupil Participation in Remedial Programs
February 1980

Robert R. Spillane Memo to:
City, Village, and District Superintendents
Diocesan Superintendents
Supervising Principals
Principals of Public and Nonpublic
Elementary and Secondary Schools
Subject: The Regents Competency Testing Program
August 1978